By Liam Timmins

Local Rugby stars Beibhinn Parsons, Aoibheann Reilly and Méabh Deely emerged victorious alongside the Irish 15s Team during the critical round of the WXV3, winning their clash against Spain at Dubai's Sevens Stadium.

The first edition of the international women's tournament WXV was held this year, a three-tier competition which divided 18 senior national squads to compete in pools of six. Following Team Ireland's poor placements in the 2023 Six Nations, they were seeded at the bottom Division 3 alongside Colombia, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Kenya and Spain.

Parsons, Reilly and Deely were chosen among other upcomers for the squad led by Scott Bemand, who's decision to omit older players was initially questioned. Regardless the local ladies are far from inexperienced with a combined 38 caps under their belts. Notably Beibhinn was among the Women's Sevens Squad to seal an Olympic qualification for 2024 following their World Series victory.

The local squad were placed against Kazakhstan for the first game hosted at Sevens Stadium in Dubai. Team Ireland absolutely dominated during the clash on a record-breaking scoreline of 109-0 over the opposition. Méabh Deely pinned an early try during the first-half, diving over into the corner, while Beibhinn Parsons scored four tries of her own and was dubbed Player-of-the-Match.

The following week they were pitted against Colombia and similarly overwhelmed their competitors on a margin of 64-3. For their fourth try a, cross-field kick from Dannah O'Brien found the hands of Beibhinn who then sent Méabh into score, an inspiring showing of Ballinasloe kinship on display. Meanwhile Aoibheann found her opportunity on the field, being moved out of replacements on this occasion.

The true test for the Women's squad was now on stage for a final clash against Spain on the following Saturday of October 28. The young blood within the Irish squad were keen on redeeming themselves with this match following poor results in the 2023 Six Nations and having been knocked out from World Cup qualification in 2021 by Spain.

Local players Meabh Deely, Beibhinn Parsons and Aoibheann Reilly (front) celebrating alongside family (back)

On game-day the situation was looking dire for the girls at home, having lost their co-captain to the sin-bin and being down 13-3 within the first half. Beibhinn nearly found an opening to score during these minutes but was knocked on at her crucial moment. Fortunately in the second half, Team Ireland gave it their all and picked themselves up from a 10-0 deficit to win with two maul tries from Grace Moore and Neve Jones.

With their victory, Ireland have earned their promotion up to WXV2, while Samoa relegates back to WXV3. Given our local girls will now be up against their Six Nations counterparts for the WXV2 2024 edition, they will certainly have to get their boots out and embrace these next challenges.

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